



Observatory

NATO News & Opinion Clips

No.7 – March 2010

Welcome to NATO Watch's monthly *Observatory*. Our focus is on NATO policy-making and operational activities and the clips are drawn from a wide range of subscriptions, feeds and alerts covering a substantial part of the major English language newspapers and other periodicals worldwide. If you are short on time – go straight to the recommended reading, marked ♣♣

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Quote – Unquote:

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The demilitarization of Europe - where large swaths of the general public and political class are averse to military force and the risks that go with it - has gone from a blessing in the 20th century to an impediment to achieving real security and lasting peace in the 21st

[Speech](#) by US Defense Secretary Robert Gates at National Defense University, 23 February

The problems of the 21st century can only be solved multilaterally. And there is no stronger, more effective framework for that cooperation than NATO..... A key priority for me is to enhance NATO's "connectivity" with the broader international community, by building new ties to civilian actors – the United Nations, the European Union, the World Bank, all the way to the NGO community.

[Speech](#) by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at Georgetown University, Washington DC, 22 February

This Alliance has endured because of the skill of our diplomats, the strength of our soldiers, and – most importantly – the power of its founding principles.

Address by [Hon. Hillary Rodham Clinton](#), US Secretary of State, Fourth Seminar on NATO's Strategic Concept, Washington DC, 22 February

Why does the military of a country convinced it's becoming ungovernable think itself so capable of making another ungovernable country governable?

Tom Engelhardt, [Explain Something to Me - Fixing What's Wrong in Washington... in Afghanistan](#), [TomDispatch.com](#), 21 February

A future Conservative Government will make NATO reform a key strategic priority

[Speech](#) by UK Shadow Secretary of State for Defence, Liam Fox, London, 11 February

Being a US citizen will not spare an American from getting assassinated by military or intelligence operatives overseas if the individual is working with terrorists and planning to attack fellow Americans.

US Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair, congressional testimony, cited by [Democracy Now!](#) 9 February

Static, heavy metal armies are not going to impress terrorists, pirates or computer hackers..... to carry out NATO's job effectively today, the Alliance should become the hub of a network of security partnerships and a centre for consultation on international security issues – even issues on which the Alliance might never take action.

[Speech](#) by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Munich Security Conference, 7 February

NATO Watch Feature Articles:

War's brave new world

By [David Isenberg](#), NATO Watch Associate

This article was first published on 1 March, in 'Across The Aisle', Partnership for a Secure America's Bipartisan Foreign Policy and National Security Blog

It's a brave new world out there, but I don't think it is the one Aldous Huxley had in mind when he wrote his famed book in 1932.

What Huxley gave us was a frightening vision of the future. And in one sense, though not the one Huxley was writing about, that vision is becoming

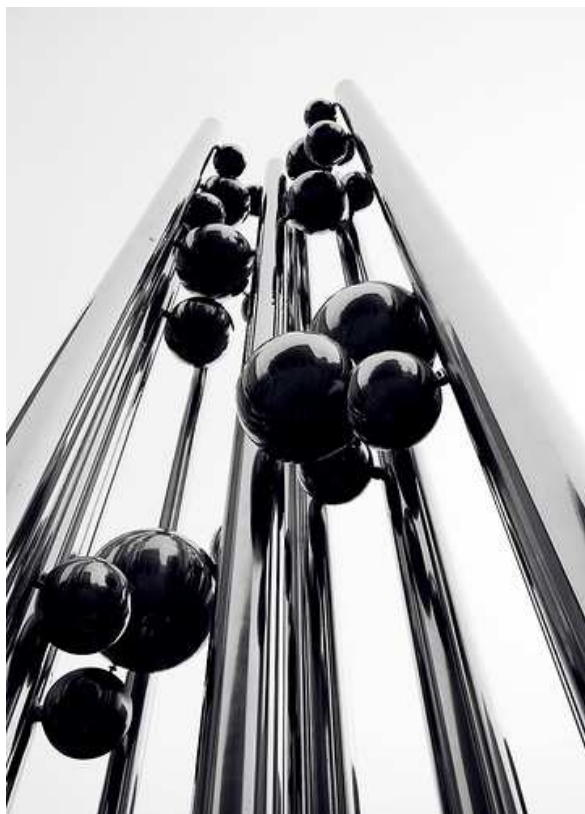
reality. I refer to the expanding role of robots in war.

The most visible aspect of this is the use of aerial drones such as targeting Al Qaeda militants with Predator drone strikes. Predictably, some places, such as the [Weekly Standard](#), think this fine and dandy, and worry only that we do not use them more for which they criticize President Obama. That is ironic as the President has authorized more drone attacks in the first year of his term in office than Bush did in his entire presidency.

But war is inherently unpredictable. One of the few ways we have of restraining its destructiveness is by having military personnel perform their duties in a framework of carefully

wrought, time tested framework grounded in civic-military and ethical considerations. While pilots may sometimes be egomaniacal Top Guns they at least spend some time thinking about these things. But what happens when the man operating a Predator is just another technician, no different from any other journeyman such as an electrician or plumber? What happens when the use of deadly force is just another day at the office?

Boston Globe columnist H.D.S. Greenway noted that before 9/11, the CIA hesitated to strike bin Laden's farm in Afghanistan because women and children might be killed. But as the war drags on the rules of engagement, rules against targeted assassination, whom to kill and not kill, have slipped, as they invariably do in all wars.



(photo credit: [Placebo Púrpura/flickr](#))

If that is too philosophical a consideration for you to ponder let's consider the practical. Is the United States ready for the time when other nations use such technology? According to a Newsweek [article](#) by Peter Singer of the Brookings Institute who, last year, published the definitive book on the subject, "[Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century](#)" at least 40 other countries—from Belarus and Georgia to India, Pakistan, and Russia—have begun to build, buy, and deploy unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, showcasing their efforts at international weapons expos ranging from the premier Paris Air Show to smaller events in Singapore and Bahrain. In the last six months alone, Iran has begun production on a pair of weapons-ready surveillance drones, while China has debuted the Pterodactyl and Sour Dragon, rivals to America's

Predator and Global Hawk. All told, two thirds of worldwide investment in unmanned planes in 2010 will be spent by countries other than the United States.

And what happens when the weapons doing the killing are controlled by civilian agencies, as opposed to the armed forces? In January Hakimullah Mehsud, leader of the Pakistan Taliban, was killed by a missile fired an unmanned aircraft hovering over the Afghan-Pakistani border – but launched by an operator in the US. He was the mastermind of multiple suicide bomb attacks in Pakistan and was part of the suicide mission on December 30 at Khost, just across the border in Afghanistan, which killed seven CIA agents.

In the effort to get payback the United States launched 15 clinical drone attacks in which more than 100 people died along the border. Thus, for the first time ever, a civilian intelligence agency is manipulating robots from halfway around the world in a program of extrajudicial executions in a country with which Washington is not at war.

As Singer [wrote](#) last month:

Q. Are We at War in Pakistan ? (Or Is It Not a War Because We're Only Using Drones?)

American unmanned systems have carried out more than 80 air strikes into Pakistan, more than we did with manned bombers in the opening round of the Kosovo War just a decade ago.

By the old standards, this would be a war. But why do we not view it as such? Is it because it is being run by the CIA and not the military? Is it because Congress never debated it? Is it because we view the whole thing as costless (to us)? Or, are the definitions changing — and what used to be war, isn't anymore?

Furthermore, a cost-benefit analysis of the use of drones indicates that it may be less effective than thought. A [study](#) last October by the New American Foundation estimated concluded that, since January 2008, the American kill has included "about 20 leaders of al-Qaeda, the Taliban and allied groups in addition to hundreds of lower-level militants and civilians. Under President Obama, the strikes have taken out at most [a] half-dozen militant leaders while also killing as many as 530 others – of those, around 250 to 400 are reported to have been lower-level militants, about three-quarters; and about a quarter appear to have been civilians." In other words, about one-third of those killed were civilian.

Editors Note: Should NATO adopt a common policy position on extrajudicial executions by drone missiles? Could the Alliance do more to regulate their production, transfer and use? Please [write](#) to us at NATO Watch with your views

Romania and the US anti-ballistic missile system

By [Dr Liviu Muresan](#) and Claudiu Degeratu, [EURISC Foundation](#), Romania

Introduction

The US government's decision to invite Romania as one of the southern European locations to host interception elements of the US ballistic missile defence (BMD) system is a momentous decision for both Romania and for the entire southern flank of the North Atlantic Alliance. The invitation of President Obama launched through Helen Tauscher, the US official in charge of nuclear affairs, came immediately after the completion of the US Missile Defence Review and during the final phase of US-Russian START talks.

The US Vice President Joe Biden's visit to Bucharest in September 2009 confirmed indirectly that the White House was looking to reshape the political framework for implementing the new architecture of US BMD in Europe and prepared Romania and the Allies for this new step. Several factors influenced the decision: technological advances, the increased US presence in Afghanistan and a new US Administration in Washington.

The debate in Europe

This evolution in the last five years cannot be understood without mentioning the interdependent, political, strategic and conceptual plans which exist between the US and NATO as well as among US and European allies. It should be said first that, from the original American decision to deploy missile defence architecture in Eastern Europe in 2006 to the current date, there has been a constant and positive trend of allied dialogue on this subject, despite differences of opinion at the European level. Broadly speaking these divisions can be divided between one group of sceptical European countries, which has tended to support the development of a preventive cooperative disarmament policy, open to Russia, and a somewhat larger grouping of European countries that perceives themselves as being directly at risk from possible short and medium-range ballistic missiles. This latter position has proved to be difficult to refute and has been the most dominant.

In principle, it is this latter position that is also supported by the Romanian Government, which emphasizes two goals: defending the territorial integrity of the Alliance (based on the principle of the indivisibility of Alliance security space) and transatlantic solidarity (based on the principle of proper and equal consultation in the face of an emerging threat). In particular, for public opinion in Romania and Bulgaria, the question of territorial defence became important when the media

started to publish various maps that actually had "white spots" not covered by the American BMD system in South East Europe. After the 'war test' in Iraq, when Alliance solidarity had been questioned, missile defences in Europe are part of the new solidarity test, alongside the war in Afghanistan and the process of intra-allied strategic clarification (through the strategic concept review).



(A Scud missile at the National Military Museum. Bucharest – photo credit: [Nomad Tales/flickr](#))

The debate in Romania

For the relative new-comers in the Alliance, including Romania, the need for strategic clarity, which will hopefully materialize in the new strategic concept, represents a key objective. The implementation of missile defences, together with the objective of collective defence and the fight against terrorism is a strategic triad that is likely to be constantly promoted by Romania through the strategic bi-lateral partnership with the US and within the Alliance.

This latest American presence in Romania is not a first, since there are already regular training facilities in the country for American troops stationed in Europe. This framework provides certainty, a solid foundation for strengthening security guarantees and ensures an active Romanian policy and contribution to international missions both within the Alliance and among 'coalitions of the willing'. The bilateral framework

includes also broader cooperation in defence and security, including combating terrorism, new threats including ballistic missiles and information sharing. Generally, it is agreed that without this strategic partnership, Romania could not benefit from a series of bilateral relationship opportunities, and the latest decision regarding missile defences may be considered as part of a new level of complexity in US-Romanian bilateral relations.

The Black Sea regional security context

The new American invitation could also be considered as a geopolitical breakthrough for the region, a step that could emphasize the priorities of a regional security agenda and the challenges of the southern flank at the border of the Alliance. Romania, both at the official and academic level, has been an active supporter of NATO and the EU assuming a stronger regional security agenda in its entirety, from the civil dimension to the military one, from the economic challenges to the agenda of inter-ethnic relations, from promoting the rule of law to building a regional energy security connected to the united European energy zone. New threats coming from unexpected directions, using unknown technologies or ways of acting must be a concern of the US, NATO and the EU and this assessment could partly explain the new geopolitical and geo-strategic dimension associated with the US missile defence decision.



(Black Sea coast – photo credit: [Giara/flickr](#))

While some initially sceptical assessments of the new Obama administration's foreign policy anticipated little US interest in the broader Black Sea region and the frozen conflicts there, the missile defence decision indicates that this may not be the case. Indeed, it may provide an impetus for regional NATO allies (such as Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey) to come together with other partners in the region to explore new non-military opportunities associated with the US presence in the southern flank. For instance, the expeditious implementation of a Visa waiver programme in Romania.

Ratifying the decision in Romania

In the official announcement, Romanian President Traian Basescu emphasized the purely defensive

nature of the system that will be deployed, and stated that interceptor elements are not directed against Russia and that Romania will talk to all parties. Subsequently, Romanian officials have also stressed that the decision to invite Romania to become one of the host countries will increase national and regional security. At the regional level, Romanian priorities cover a wide spectrum of issues: the situation in the Caucasus after the Georgian war; the maintenance of frozen conflicts in Moldova and Azerbaijan; fundamentalist extremism that feed terrorist groups; the existence of the risk of small arms proliferation and trafficking of people; and insecurity and weak protection of pipelines and access to energy resources.

This simple enumeration of risks and threats, well known in Washington and Brussels, must be remembered, not just in the context of a redefinition of the transatlantic security agenda, but to highlight that there will be a great responsibility on the parties involved during the negotiations to agree the missile defence deployment. As with earlier debates in Poland and the Czech Republic, there will be an intense internal political process in Romania that will need to be undertaken and managed with a degree of sensitivity and openness.

The US-Romanian agreement will initially be negotiated by senior government officials on both sides, agreed by ministers and then ratified by Parliament. From the first reactions one can observe a constructive convergence of positions of the majority of members of the Romanian Parliament underlining their support for the National Defence Supreme Council (CSAT) decision. Opponents have so far stressed the need for public debate, questioned the budgetary impact and the impact on bilateral relations with the Russian Federation. The time span, with ratification not expected before 2015, also offers the opportunity to run the entire consultation process without being conditional on the outcome of disputed Presidential elections. From the first official declaration of President Traian Basescu and especially of the Foreign Ministry officials who provided further details, it has been stressed that Romania's position will be further defined, possibly in a future National Security Strategy to be issued in 2010.

Consultations with neighbours

It is also noteworthy that there has already been an initial consultation meeting between Romanian and Republic of Moldova officials at the minister and secretary of state level with positive results, although the current communist opposition in Moldova remains sceptical - an attitude illustrated by the statement of former Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin, who labelled the US and Romanian decision as placing Moldova on the "front line". The Communist Party of Moldova later

sweetened the tone slightly by reiterating the position of neutrality of Moldova. The Communist position in Chisinau should be seen in a context in which the separatist Transdnister leader, Igor Smirnov launched the idea of placing Russian Iskander tactical missiles in the separatist province. The idea was however rejected by Russian officials, including Russian ambassador to NATO, Dmitri Rogozin. At the level of government, the Minister of Defense of Moldova, Vitalie Marinuta, [said](#):

I believe that Romania's intention to install on its territory part of the missile shield is an internal problem of Romania. Regarding the Republic of Moldova, can say that from a military missile shield will not negatively influence the security of our country. Conversely, in the case of installation of missile shield components, air security to Romania will be extended beyond its land boundaries. Under these circumstances, because of technologies that offer land interceptors of the missile shield and positive nature of relations between Moldova and Romania, security and defense of the airspace of the Republic of Moldova could increase.

There were also meetings in Bucharest between Romanian officials and the Ambassador of Bulgaria Valentin Radomirski, Ukrainian Ambassador Markian Kulik and Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia Zoran Popovic to discuss Romanian participation in the missile defence system. In addition, bilateral political consultations on security issues were held on 10 February in Budapest at the level of Foreign Ministry head of department, on which occasion the subject of the missile defence was also approached.

In this regional geopolitical equation, Russia advocates its position via a wide range of voices and officials. The position of Moscow came as no surprise: the official Russian line has been known for the past four years and involves a constant evolution in the line that NATO's enlargement policy is a general threat to Russian security and the acceptance by some Eastern allies of

elements of the American anti-missile system a specific component of that threat. It was noted however that compared to some of the earlier 'full-on' rhetorical responses from Moscow, this time around there was a certain "official fatigue" among the Russian response, with earlier objections simply being reiterated. More significantly, perhaps, is the extent to which Moscow opposition is also being used as a blocking condition or tactic during the US-Russian START treaty negotiations.

Conclusions

Since 2006, the Alliance has kept missile defence dialogue and cooperation with Russia high on its agenda. The constant and practical steps undertaken by the Alliance have been acknowledged by Russia and this Allied policy of engagement was reaffirmed recently in Moscow by the Secretary General of NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen. This cooperative position runs parallel to the Alliance policy of not allowing a veto right for Russia against the NATO programme on missile defence and enlargement.

We think that managing the expectations of allies and maintaining a permanent flow of information towards the Russian Federation should be two priorities for both the US and Romania. Beside the bilateral process a complementary programme of periodic regional diplomatic consultations should carefully follow developments and could explore other non-missile defence opportunities. Despite the fact that too many of the details about political and military dimensions of future security developments in the Black Sea region remain underdeveloped, we can assume in this initial stage of missile defence discussions that Romania's profile and responsibilities in the region are being "reset" in relation to the US, NATO, EU and Russia.

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(photo credit: [Stitch](#))

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(photo credit: US Army/flickr)

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(photo credit: US Army/flickr)

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"If you take the whole gamut of threats, from state-sponsored organisations to industrial espionage, private individuals and malcontents, you're talking about a remarkable number of attempted attacks on our system — I'd say in the thousands"

Lord West of Spithead, the UK Security Minister discussing the daily attacks to critical computer networks controlling electricity supplies, telecommunications and banking | Times Online

(photo credit: [Will Lion](#)/flickr)

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